



## 2017 Federal Legislative Priorities

The Feeding America network is the nation's largest charitable response to hunger. Our network of 200 food banks and 60,000 community agencies work together in successful public/private partnerships to assist more than 46 million Americans a year, including 12 million children and 7 million seniors. Hunger is solvable and everyone is part of the solution. Families, churches, food banks, businesses, communities, and governments working together can ensure all families have the resources and nutrition needed to succeed.

To enable our charitable network to meet current needs, we depend upon strong federal nutrition assistance programs, including SNAP, child nutrition programs, and federal commodity foods through TEFAP and CSFP. SNAP alone provides ten times the meals enabled through the Feeding America network, underscoring the significant role it plays in connecting families with meals nationwide. We also need strong giving incentives to invest in a robust nonprofit sector to continue to enrich communities and provide vital services.

Feeding America urges Congress to partner with us to create programs that help increase opportunity among the clients we serve and that maintain the longstanding bipartisan commitment to protect anti-hunger programs from budget cuts and harmful policy changes.

### ENSURE THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROTECTS CRITICAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Federal nutrition programs are the cornerstone for ensuring that struggling Americans can get the food they need when they fall on hard times. Congress must protect SNAP and other critical programs like TEFAP, CSFP, and child nutrition programs to ensure they remain a resource for millions of Americans in need of food assistance, and should:

- **Oppose efforts to block grant or cut SNAP through the federal budget process.** The countercyclical structure of SNAP allows it to respond efficiently and effectively to changes in the economy.
- **Oppose efforts to cut TEFAP and CSFP through the federal budget process.**
- **Ensure charitable giving incentives that nonprofits rely on and tax credits for working families are protected in any tax reform language included in a budget resolution.**

### ENSURE THE NEXT FARM BILL REDUCES HUNGER IN AMERICA

The Farm Bill sets food policy and support for numerous critical nutrition and agriculture programs and is a critical cornerstone of supporting both the agriculture community and those that rely on federal nutrition programs. The next farm bill has enormous potential to help reduce hunger and support agriculture by:

- **Protecting and Strengthening SNAP:** SNAP is efficient and effective, reduces food insecurity and helps working families put healthy food on the table. Millions of unemployed Americans remain without a job, food assistance, or a job training program to enable economic recovery.
  - Proposals to block grant SNAP, cap or cut funding, or otherwise restrict participation would result in millions more Americans losing food assistance.
  - SNAP benefits are inadequate and Feeding America recommends Congress transition to calculating SNAP benefits based on the low-cost food plan.
- **Protecting and Strengthening The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP):** To enable resources needed by food banks, Congress should increase funding for TEFAP food purchases and protect TEFAP storage and distributions funds.
- **Strengthening donation policies and incentives in the Farm Bill:** Feeding America urges Congress to address policy and regulatory barriers to food donation through expanding FSIS and FDA guidelines to include food donation; expand access to USDA grant programs addressing agriculture policy and programs to ensure food donation and food banks are a key component of connecting US consumers with US grown food; and expand resources to invest in ag surplus removal programs in state and regional ag economies to provide growers and food banks a method to connect excess wholesome food with communities in need.

## REDUCE HUNGER THROUGH FEDERAL SPENDING LEGISLATION

- **FY2018 Appropriations should support strong funding for TEFAP**, including providing full funding for TEFAP food purchases at \$329 million a year, and \$100 million for TEFAP storage and distribution funds to support the infrastructure and distribution capacity necessary to meet need.
- **FY2018 Appropriations should provide an increase beyond the current \$236 million in funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)** which provides monthly nutritious food packages to 619,000 low-income seniors. This program is critically underfunded, and new caseload is needed to meet the needs of seniors struggling with hunger. We also urge Congress to provide additional funding to serve any new states with USDA-approved plans.
- **FY2018 Appropriations should support the Summer EBT funding** to expand the reach of the summer EBT option for children who aren't able to access a summer feeding site.
- **FY2018 Appropriations should provide sufficient funding to the Older American Act's home-delivered and congregate meals programs.**

## STRENGTHEN THE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY IN TAX REFORM

Tax policy plays a key role in the fight against hunger and helps reduce food waste. Feeding America food banks rely on support from a variety of sources, including individual giving, government commodities, and donations from all segments of the food industry.

- **Protect and strengthen the charitable tax deduction** to ensure the ability of our network to raise vitally needed funds and supplement vital federal programs.
- **Protect and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC)**, which lift millions of working families out of poverty and increase the stability they have found through the workforce.
- **Protect and strengthen food donation tax incentives**, which play a powerful role in connecting excess nutritious food with people in need. Without the tax incentives, it costs growers, retailers, and food companies more to donate food than it does to landfill it.

## PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The federal child nutrition programs are an essential investment in the one in six children in America that face hunger. Ensuring all children have the nutritious food they need to learn, grow, and thrive is critical to our nation's future. In addition to protecting SNAP, the largest safety net for children, Congress should help maintain strong nutrition standards and efficient access to all child nutrition programs.

- While federal CNR legislation will not likely be pursued in 2017, we urge Congress to protect the funding and structure of child nutrition programs in budget and spending legislation.
- We urge USDA to ensure that regulations on child nutrition programs protect access to these vital programs for the millions of children that rely on them for nutritious food.